

Information Operations in the IBCT

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We need to find new ways to deter new adversaries. . . . We need to make the leap into the information age, which is the critical foundation of our transformation efforts.

—Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld

THE FIRST OF SEVEN planned interim brigade combat teams (IBCTs) is fielded with its complement of interim armored vehicles (IAVs) and digitized command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems. Using current off-the-shelf equipment combined with a unique organizational structure, the 3d IBCT, 2d Infantry Division, has capabilities unlike any other brigade combat team.

In October 1999, the Army's leadership unveiled the Army Vision, outlining a need to transform the Army based on emerging security challenges and the requirement to respond more rapidly across the full spectrum of operations. IBCTs are designed as early entry forces capable of deploying within 96 hours to fight and win small-scale contingency operations in complex and urban terrain. Keeping pace with the changing face of warfare, the IBCT employs both conventional and asymmetric capabilities. The IBCTs provide the commander in chief with a new option of decisive contingency response. The IBCT cannot conduct forced-entry operations, but it does give the joint force commander an improved capability to arrive immediately behind forced-entry forces and to begin operations to shape the battlespace.

The IBCT's major fighting components are three mechanized infantry battalions, which use highly mobile, medium-weight IAVs. The brigade's effectiveness is enhanced by a field artillery battalion; a robust reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition squadron; military intelligence, antiarmor, engineer, and signal companies; and a brigade sup-

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port battalion. These elements also use the IAV with variants for mobile gun systems; antiarmor carriers; 105-millimeter (mm) artillery; engineer mobility support vehicles; medical support vehicles; nuclear, biological, and chemical reconnaissance; and command and control (C2) carriers. The field artillery has 155mm towed artillery assets.

The IBCT headquarters staff closely mirrors that of a division, given the unit's enhanced organic capabilities. Beyond the coordinating staff group consisting of the S1, S2, S3, S4, and S6, there are several special staffs and staff groups in the IBCT, including—

- Medical personnel in the IBCT surgeon's section.
- Military police and engineers in the maneuver support coordination cell.
- Air defense artillery and aviation personnel in the air defense and air space management section.
- Field artillery personnel in the fires and effects coordination cell (FECC).
- Information operations (IO), civil affairs (CA), psychological operations (PSYOP), and legal personnel in the IO section. Although these special staff elements are at the brigade headquarters, the total number of personnel authorized has been kept to

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a minimum, 111 total, to facilitate deployability.

The IBCT has the most advanced C4ISR technologies available. This technology gives commanders and their staffs a digital, fully dimensional common operating picture (COP) of the battlefield. This digital view enables commanders to locate and track critical targets precisely, conduct simultaneous operations with lethal and nonlethal means, operate with joint and multinational forces, and recognize and protect their own forces and other friendly forces. Each IBCT element is equipped with an appropriate type of Army Battle Command System (ABCS).

While the IBCT doctrinally conducts the military decisionmaking process (MDMP) in accordance with U.S. Army Field Manual 101-5, *Army Planning and Orders Production*, the manner in which it executes the process is entirely different.¹ The unit leverages and exploits the technology afforded by ABCS/C4ISR to conduct distributed, collaborative, and simultaneous decisionmaking. The IBCT's planning methodology is conducted via the C4ISR architecture, allowing commanders to exchange plans and ideas from their current locations. Situational understanding and accelerated MDMP allow the commander and his staff to develop more relevant courses of action because they have a complete understanding of the operational situation.

The IO Sections Role in the IBCT

To assist in responding to the changing international security environment, an IO section is embedded into the IBCT. Among other tasks, the section —

- Plans nonlethal effects to degrade the adversary's information environment.
- Leverages assets in response to security challenges such as terrorism, international crime, computer hackers, and genocidal violence.
- Advises the command on cultural awareness to foster a positive relationship with the local civilian and military leadership in the area of operation.
- Manages the media to portray the unit's best possible image.

The IO section at the brigade level represents a type of microcosm of the IO effort at division and higher. Tactical exploitation of national capabilities (TENCAP) extends the reachback capability of the brigade, granting a COP available only to division-level commanders in the past.

The guiding document for incorporating the IO section into the unit is the IBCT Organizational and Operational (O&O) Concept, dated 30 June 2000. This concept identifies a need for effects-based targeting. It places the responsibility to closely coordinate lethal and nonlethal effects under the FECC's control, dual-hatting the field artillery battalion commander as an effects coordinator. The IO section was created to facilitate incorporating nonlethal effects, providing planners for IO, CA, PSYOP, and electronic attack (EA). Additionally, a brigade operational law team provides legal support to all aspects of IO.

As IO doctrine evolves, traditional staff responsibilities for electronic warfare (EW) and operations security transition from the G/S3 to the IO staff officer. Likewise, public affairs (PA) coordination, traditionally the adjutant's area of staff responsibility, becomes tied to the IO arena as well. Just as at the corps and division levels, the debate continues on the proper staff relationship of the IO section within the IBCT organizational construct. The latest draft of Brigade Special Text 6-20-40, *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Fires and Effects for Brigade Combat Team Operations*, indicates the IO section is embedded into the FECC.² Although this document and IBCT O&O indicate the IO section works in the FECC, some IO elements do not cleanly fit within the effects coordinator's responsibilities for effects-based targeting. As a result, in the 3d IBCT, the IO officer has maintained a position on the special staff, working for the executive officer.

IO section organization. The commander and his staff use the IO section to synchronize all IO elements and related IO elements. In a stability and support operations (SASO) environment, the IO section is significantly engaged as the center of gravity for operations shifts toward employing asymmetric means available to the IBCT. The section consists of two IO officers, a CA major, an EW captain, and a PSYOP staff sergeant. As an integral part of effects planning, the IO section synchronizes organic IBCT assets with reachback resources to develop the IO component of the effects concept and operation plan. Reachback enhances the IO section's operational agility by improving its access to timely and relevant information, enhancing overall situational awareness of the nonlinear battlefield.

The IBCT lacks significant organic IO assets. Depending on the nature of the contingency and the adversary, the IO section may be augmented with additional plugs, such as CA, PSYOP, PA, and EA elements, to reinforce its capability for IO and non-lethal effects planning and coordination. The section's resident expert facilitates the request process for the appropriate mix of augmentation and rapidly implements the assets into operations. Effective use of IO elements allows the commander to use his maneuver elements more efficiently. For example, if CA and PSYOP efforts deter a potential riot or demonstration, other assets would not be required to respond to a resultant incident. Unfortunately, cause-and-effect relationships are not easily drawn in using nonlethal assets, and often the results occur over a considerable amount of time, so empirical evidence is often difficult in determining an action's effectiveness.

CA. Civil-military operations (CMO) play an increasingly important role in military operations globally. The CA officer is the staff lead for planning and coordinating CMO in the IBCT area of operations. Civil affairs team B (CAT-B), consisting of three CA team As (CAT-As), would be expected to support the IBCT during SASO. CAT-B would also influence relations between military forces and civil authorities, and coordinate and synchronize the efforts of nongovernment and international organizations. CAT-B would be under the control of IBCT headquarters, and depending on mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time, and civilians, the CAT-As are allocated in a direct support mode to the battalions or held in general support and applied to the IBCT main effort.

PSYOP. The PSYOP noncommissioned officer (NCO) plans and coordinates PSYOP support to IBCT operations from attached PSYOP elements or higher headquarters. A tactical PSYOP detachment (TPD), consisting of three tactical PSYOP teams (TPTs), would be expected to support the IBCT during a SASO with face-to-face, loudspeaker, and product dissemination operations to influence adversary forces' behavior. If required, the TPD might be augmented with PSYOP assets to locally produce requested products, making it a self-sufficient PSYOP element. The IO section provides staff liaison with the TPD and integrates and synchronizes their operations with the maneuver plan. The PSYOP NCO assists the TPTs by ensuring requisite security support is provided to conduct operations and keeps the commander informed on activities.

PA. Responding to the local and international media can be consuming. However, quickly and accurately releasing information to the media will

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have a lasting positive impact. During SASO, the media challenge often revolves around the legitimacy of U.S. military involvement due to the political nature of the deployment. Winning the media's trust takes on increasing importance in this environment, given the media's ability to influence international and domestic public opinion. Lacking a PA officer on the staff, the IO section serves in that capacity, developing media guidance and talking points, and coordinating media visits until augmentation support arrives. The section also corresponds with the division or joint task force PA office, providing information on IBCT significant events that need to be addressed through press releases. A PA team from the PA detachment at higher headquarters could provide media support to the IBCT according to the PA information strategy.

EW. Disrupting the enemy's C2 and fire-direction vehicles deliberately and quickly reduces the information flow to and from the opposing commander, placing him at a disadvantage. Although the IBCT has no organic EA assets, EA assets may support the unit during small-scale contingency operations. The EW officer works closely with the targeting technician in the FECC and the collection management officer in the brigade S2 to plan, coordinate, and synchronize EA operations. The EW officer is responsible for identifying potential adversary C2 and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance targets and deconflicting targets against the joint restricted frequency list. The EW officer also requests EA support from higher headquarters.

Battalion fire support officers and NCOs serve as IO specialists at their echelons. They are sensitized to cultural considerations of the local population in their areas of operation. In the absence of supporting CATs, they serve as advisers to their commanders for conducting CMO.

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Information assurance (IA). Digitization, a battlefield enhancer for the IBCT, is also a potential vulnerability. IA operations provide availability of information systems, authentication of participating users, confidentiality of transmissions, and nonrepudiation of transmitted or received information. The IBCT, with support from higher headquarters, can protect communications, networks, and computers; detect misuse or intrusion of these systems; and rapidly restore information once compromised, corrupted, or destroyed. Although the brigade S6 has primary responsibility for IA, the IO section and brigade S2 also become involved in ensuring the IBCT maintains a sufficient defense posture against penetration and subsequent exploitation of its information systems. Routine meetings are held with this IA triad to address vulnerabilities and countermeasures.

IO tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). As mentioned earlier, the IO section is integrated into the FECC to contribute to the targeting process, primarily focusing on nonlethal effects. The O&O Concept defines these effects as “the result of the directed application of lethal and nonlethal capabilities to achieve a desired purpose of outcome in support of the commander’s intent. Effects are a component of the operations plan and must be fully integrated and synchronized with other elements of the plan, particularly the scheme of maneuver. Planning must include the control and management of unintended effects and their impact on the mission. Normally, effects planning does not include subordinate maneuver forces or the direct fires organic to those forces. When fully integrated, effects and

maneuver set the conditions for tactical success and combine to achieve the commander’s intent.”

The IBCT IO section TTP are not unlike those conducted at division level, although the process is expedited due to the increased use of digitization and collaborative planning. Operating in an asymmetric operational environment places increased emphasis on nonlethal effects. The IO section develops IO objectives and coordinates, integrates, and synchronizes nonlethal effects to support the overall targeting process. Subject matter experts within the IO section coordinate closely with augmentation team chiefs and higher headquarters to maximize their assets’ use. An IO working group meets before the daily targeting meeting to refine targets that support IO objectives. The effects coordinator or another FECC representative attends the working group and refines the brigade targeting guidance before the targeting meeting based on discussions during the meeting. Since the IO section is only a coordinating staff, the brigade S3 releases the tasking once the plans are approved.

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As the Army transforms to a more agile and versatile force, doctrine is attempting to keep pace. The Fort Lewis, Washington, conversion of the first two interim brigades is proceeding, with 3d IBCT anticipated to achieve initial operational capability in the near future. At the same time, IO doctrine is evolving, with increased insight on the practical applications in real-world contingencies. As the IBCTs begin operational deployment, the relative importance of IO will be demonstrated in the increased flexibility of employing the force to deal with nonconventional forces on the battlefield. **MR**

NOTES

1. U.S. Army Field Manual 101-5, *Army Planning and Orders* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 31 May 1997).

2. Brigade Special Text 6-20-40, *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Fires and Effects for Brigade Combat Team Operations*, 3d Interim Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Washington, June 2001.

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